



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

Media

July 2005



PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

With USAID support, 10 Afghan male and female photojournalists traveled around the country to document the historical presidential elections and the electoral process. These images illustrate the story of Afghanistan's first national democratic elections beginning with the registration process, campaigning, election day, vote counting and the official election results.

MEDIA SNAPSHOT

- Built independent news agency providing daily national news coverage of Afghanistan.
- Supported creation of national independent radio network.
- Created local and national media that played a key role in educating the Afghan public for the Presidential elections.
- Trained nearly 2,000 journalists, with many receiving on-the-job training in working media institutions.

OVERVIEW

USAID supports media development in Afghanistan to promote the free exchange of information and ideas vital to the democratic process and development of civil society. USAID is building the capacity of local, state and independent broadcast media through technical support, equipment upgrade, hands-on training in balanced and accurate reporting, and development of an Afghan media policy and regulatory framework.

PROGRAMS

NETWORK OF RADIO STATIONS AND TV

Since the majority of Afghans receive their news via radio, USAID has invested significant resources in upgrading the broadcasting sector. USAID has:

- Supported 32 community-based, independent FM radio stations across the country.
- Supported the creation of Tolo TV, a commercial TV station that started broadcasting on the eve of the Presidential elections and is now on the air 24 hours/day.
- Established radio monitoring and reporting units in 7 provinces to monitor media content for Afghan commercial clients and the international community.

RADIO PROGRAMMING AND DISTRIBUTION

USAID has produced independent, national radio programming emphasizing nation-building and national unity that is broadcast via satellite to 34 radio stations, including a few state stations, for 4 hours each day. Other achievements include:

- Broadcast program coverage reaching 52% of the Afghan population via AM/FM; shortwave transmission of the programming covers all of Afghanistan as well as Afghan communities living in Pakistan and Iran.
- Established a network that distributes 34 radio programs produced by NGOs, independent media outlets and USAID supported stations to more than 55 radio stations and media outlets throughout the country.
- Funded the production of numerous public interest radio programs, including award-winning children's programming as well as programs highlighting civic education, women's issues and human rights.
- Distributed 40,000 radios to vulnerable populations including rural women.



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Media (continued)



PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

Pioneering women broadcasters at Radio Sahar in Herat, one of four USAID-funded, women-managed, community FM stations.



PHOTO: USAID/AFGHANISTAN

A Tolo TV Staffer reviews the financial news hosted by a female announcer. As of February 12, 2005, Tolo TV broadcasts 24 hours per day.

TRAINING FOR MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

To strengthen Afghan media in the long-term, USAID has invested in young media professionals and students. Hundreds of journalists have been trained as part of the establishment of an independent media network across the country. The status to date is:

- Trained almost 2,000 male and female media professionals.
- Updated the journalism curriculum at six universities.
- Provided training for professors and hands-on radio and print journalism training for almost 400 novice journalists at newly established university media centers.

PUBLICATIONS AND ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

USAID has supported a number of publications and alternative media programs, such as community theatre, art shows, and the production of dozens of films and documentaries. The programs are both educational and entertaining, and designed to raise awareness and stimulate discussion on current social and political issues. USAID has:

- Supported two national news publications: Killid, a weekly magazine, and Morsal, a women's monthly magazine.
- Provided printing support to a Kabul daily newspaper and to a university printing press.
- Supported eight mobile cinemas showing feature and educational films about reconstruction, elections, human rights, health and mine safety that have reached over one million rural Afghans.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

USAID has provided capacity building for local, state, and independent broadcast media and, working with the Government of Afghanistan, has developed Afghan media policy and a regulatory framework. These efforts have strengthened the Afghan media and government's ability to promote dialogue on key political events such as Loya Jirgas and elections as Afghanistan embraces democratic governance. Achievements include:

- Established an independent news agency that provides accurate information to local, regional and international media outlets.
- Provided technical support in the development of Afghanistan's media broadcast law and the Election Media Code of Conduct.
- Provided technical advisors to the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson.